

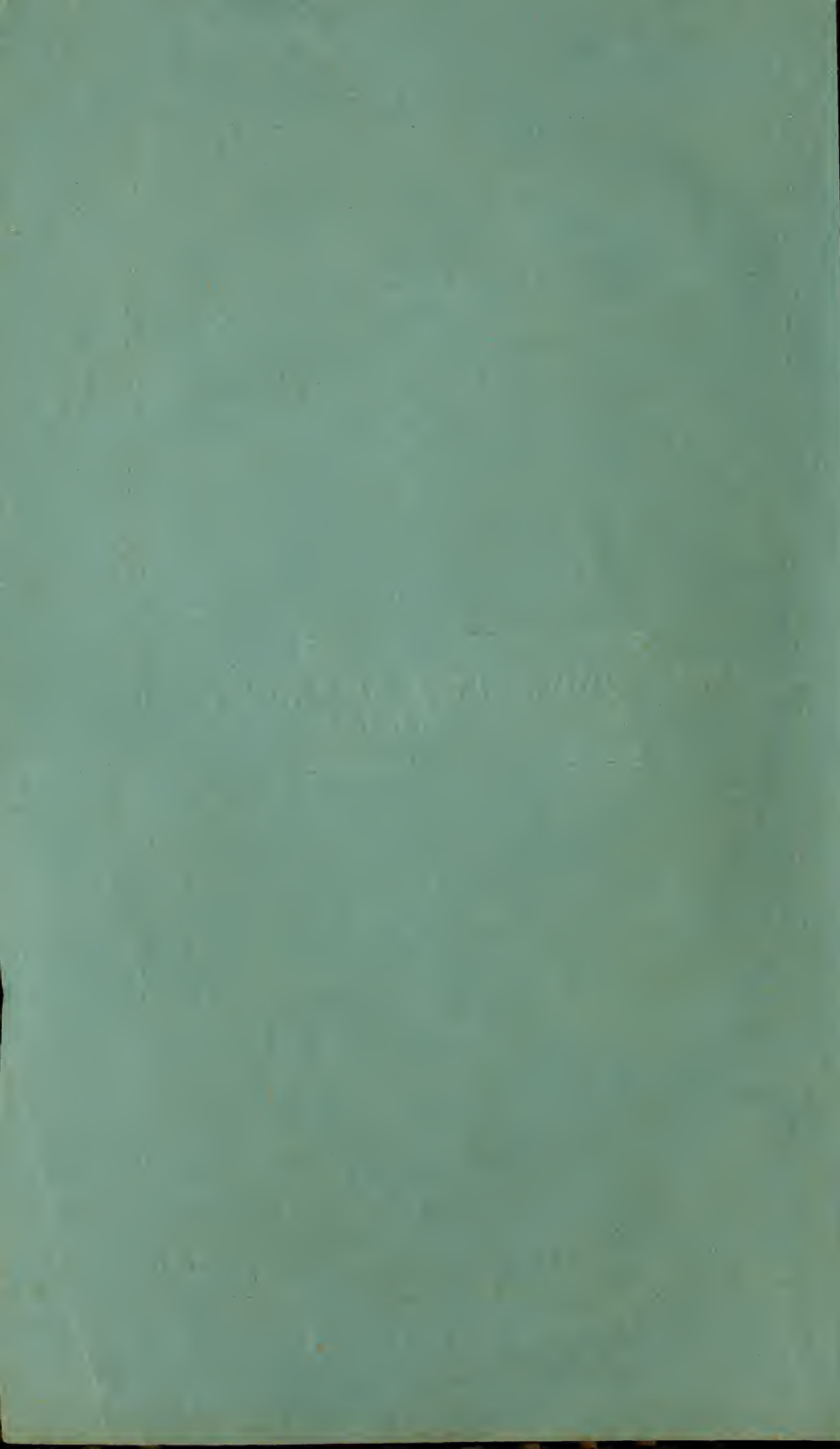
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MR. M'DOWELL'S ADDRESS,
PRINCETON, N. J. 1838.



ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

SEPTEMBER 26, 1838.

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BY JAMES M'DOWELL, ESQ.,
OF ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

SECOND EDITION.



5 PRINCETON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY R. E. HORNOR.

1839.

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COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY, September 26th, 1833.

JAMES M'DOWELL, Esq.

Sir—At a meeting of the Alumni Association, held this day, it was unanimously resolved, "that the thanks of the Association be presented to James M'Dowell, Esq., for the very eloquent Address delivered by him this day; and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

In communicating the above resolution, allow us to add the expression of our earnest hope that you will add to the obligations under which we already lie to you, a compliance with the request of the Association.

With the highest esteem and respect,

Your obedient servants,

SAMUEL R. HAMILTON,	}	COMMITTEE.
ALBERT B. DOD,		
DAVID N. BOGART,		

PRINCETON, September 27th, 1833.

GENTLEMEN—

The address upon yesterday, for which, through you, I am now presented with *the thanks* of the Alumni Association is so much overpaid by this testimony of the kindness with which it was received, that I am only sorry you should have gone farther, and have requested me to lay it before another tribunal at the expense, perhaps, of the discretion and the judgment of us both. Far better, as I am sure it would be, to commit it to the chronicle of kind recollections than to the sterner and more enduring one of the press, it shall nevertheless, be placed in your hands for publication as soon as it can be prepared for that purpose. In this, some unavoidable delay will occur, as well from the many liberties taken with the manuscript Address in the spoken one, as from some pressing out-door engagements which will occupy me for some days, but the least delay practicable will be permitted.

With my warmest and most respectful acknowledgments to the Association, be pleased to accept individually, the expression of the sincere personal regard with which I am

Your most obedient servant,

JAMES M'DOWELL.



ADDRESS.

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Alumni Association.

ANOTHER anniversary has brought us together to renew, over a common altar, the sympathies and pledges of brotherhood, and to derive from the teachings of the past the lessons and the duties of the future. We are again met as members of the same academic household, to tell over, with all its moral, the story of separation and of life; to revive the embers of early, if not decaying friendships; to foster by mutual indulgence, the grateful and glowing sentiment which here, at least, will always go forth in gratitude and in homage to the parent institution which rocked the cradle of our intellect, and blessed our boyhood by its care. We are again grouped and gathered from amidst the throngs and thoroughfares of the world into the family circle, to join our hearts and hands in the presence, and in prayer for the weal of its cherished and venerated head, and to carry hence, into all the differences which destiny or which opinion may establish amongst us, that healing and kindly influence which flows from the cultivated sense of kindred and common obligation. The sons of this institution would be less than men if, quitting their habitations and their business, and assembling year after year upon this hallowed ground of their pastime and study, they could enter anew into the forgotten engrossments of their youth, and could have the faded memory of that animated and ambitious but joyous period, with all its train of companionships and day-dreams and hopes, brought back again and pressed upon the heart in full and gushing stream, and yet could turn from it all without entertaining for each other one kindlier emotion than before, or pouring out one warmer benediction upon the sanctuary that had sheltered and had reared them. The spirit, like the body, so depends upon the things of the present—so requires the daily ministration of its daily bread—that if its connexion with the past by frequent aids from the senses be taken away, its affections are taken also,

and are yielded up, with little reservation, to the engrossments of the passing hour. The past must be involved in all the movements and purposes, or it is practically lost—it drops away into distance and into shadow, and though the poetry of its hoary image may remain, the effective power of it is gone. It is the constant presence and reciprocity of benefits and dependance which constitute the general law of man's gratitude and attachment. Take an *alumnus* from under this law—the present and immediate sense of obligation and benefit—turn him from a student into a man of the world, engage him in its schemes, lay him open for years together to the multiplying importunities of business and care, and he will afterwards feel, when his sensibilities are recalled to this nursery of his mind, by some such occasion as the present, that its many claims had waned upon his memory—that his heart had drifted away from it far out to sea, but still, that its hold upon his affections, though shaken and weakened, had never been destroyed. This hold it is a wise and benevolent purpose of your association to strengthen and to continue. To this end you lay your hand upon that of time, and check him in his waste before check is unavailing: you contest with him his right to the unlimited rule and ravage of the past, and you wring one of the dearest and most cherished portions of it from his grasp, by blending it here in annual and inspiring exhibition with the purposes of the present. You bring to this spot the graduate of another day, gather his friends and companions into his arms, surround him with associations and with scenes which embody the pictured story of his youth, with all its laugh and all its tears, and thus you revive the pulse which the tramp of the world had deadened, and thus you take from the heart the long grass which long years had gathered upon it. You do more than this—more than revive upon the graduate the sense of collegiate obligation; you collect the numerous and the scattered progeny of this institution of every age at a common rendezvous, and circulate amongst them the warm blood of family relationship. The elder son, who has spent his day as a missionary of letters, and is retiring from the field of his labours to the repose of age, is met and grouped upon this spot with a younger brother who is just girding for the contest, just going

forth as a reaper of the harvest of life ; and whilst they stand together at the side of the benefactor of both, entertaining the same sentiment of allegiance and of gratitude, every thing that makes them strangers to each other vanishes away, and the claims of a felt and kindred connexion immediately spring up between them.

By this means you establish an exterior and unrelaxing interest in favor of this college, which habitually operates, to sustain its prosperity, upon the wide and willing contributions of the country. When this convocation of its friends, warmed and animated by the impressions and incidents of this day, shall have been dissolved, and its members have gone back to the places from whence they had come, their homes will be so many separate *rostra* from which the claims and cause of the college will be pleaded with invigorated zeal, and pushed onward with fresher energy into broader and closer contact with the sympathies of the public. Fast and far as its value shall be proclaimed and felt and believed by the public, its foundations will be strengthened and its boundaries enlarged. Dedicated as it is to the great interests of mental preparation and power—to that cause which liberates the mind and equips its energies for all that is best in speculation and best in action—and long and amply as the pledge and purpose of this dedication has been redeemed before the face of the world, it may now command, is now entitled to command, from a benefited and confiding people, a help which shall be wide and sure and permanent as its own memorials of worth. Grant it a support in the degree of its desert—mete to it in the abundance of that measure wherewith it has meted unto others—and no destiny could be nobler. Sharing with others in the struggles and achievements of science, this institution maintains no arrogant pretence to exclusive renown or exclusive support. But where, it may be respectfully asked of all the confederates who have joined her in the career of letters, where is there one,—yea, one—that has laboured with a truer or a better arm through the toil of the field, or poured out a flood of richer irrigation upon the intellect of the land ? Poor in every thing but her merit ; powerless in every thing but her faculties for service, these simple elements have been to her the fabled alchymy of philosophers

by which she has turned every thing into gold ; she has wrought out of them both endowment and wealth—transmuting her very poverty into a power which is enriching herself with new abilities and her country with new benefactions. Never forfeiting by delinquencies the pupil which her fame has attracted, she is yearly adding to the thousands who rise up at the mention of her name, through every portion of the land, to render her their homage, and to “call her blessed.” Look back upon the lapse of a hundred years, see the kindred institutions which have faltered or failed at every step of that lengthened line, then turn your eye upon your own, and you see her always at her moorings ; always on her arms ; always fighting with the first and foremost in the holy cause for which she has enlisted ; never yielding her objects to a blanched and timid spirit, but pressing them onward with a bold one ; gathering her trophies from her trials, her courage from her exertions ; standing forth, at every point of that time, a cheering example to the weak and to the strong of her associates ; the white plume, indeed, of the great Henry of France, which soared in the battle when others fell, and led when others failed, and never led but to duty, to triumph, and to honour.

Gratified especially as an *alumnus* will ever feel at deriving his academic obligations from an institution so beneficently distinguished as this, the patriot every where exults with him over the results it has already accomplished, and over the prognostics which shadow forth an honourable and useful future. To whatever limit the success of the college can be extended, it is in every possible expansion, the proper subject of every man’s rejoicing. Its success is that of education ; the success of that cause through which reason, religion, liberty and law are to be maintained : the cause of rational, thinking, immortal man, over gross, perishable and animal man ; the cause of social and governed man, with his civilization advanced to the uttermost under the dominion of intelligence, or impaired to the uttermost under the abusive rule of rude and ignorant power. Adversary in relative effect, as institutions of learning may sometimes be upon the progress of each other, yet being auxiliaries for a common and a noble end, the spirit which would surround them with jealousy, and thereby narrow as to any,

or all of them, the measure of their popularity and effect, is a Vandal spirit which counterworks, as far as it goes, the great agent of human improvement, and restores the reign of barbarism and of night. It matters nothing to the world by what tongue the principles of duty be proclaimed, nor by what hand the seeds of knowledge be sown. Wherever a prejudice has been conquered, there an obstacle has been removed from the path of improvement; wherever a truth has been maintained, there a post has been taken and fortified in the progress of the mind. All that education with all of its agencies combined has ever yet been able to accomplish, has been to retrieve from waste a portion only of our intellectual domain; to cover over with verdure and with fruit but a spot here and there of the universal mind; whilst ignorance, like a great Zahara, stretches around even these with a fearful readiness, if not a power, to desolate them all by its desert and its drifting sands. And sustained and encouraged as education may be with every aid and appliance that may be had, it can never attain to perfect triumph over that "lust of the flesh and lust of the eye and pride of life"—that anti-trinity of the world which it has every where to meet and encounter as its enemy. But partial as its triumphs may be, it is still our great agent for breaking up the total usurpation of the appetites; for infusing a broader and deeper action of intelligence and virtue into the various enterprise of life; for freshening up, more and more in the etherial and immortal spirit, that burning light, that impress of divinity within it, which animalism and earth have ever been in constant and in horrid league to darken and destroy.

Independent and self-sustained as is the reputation of this college, and safely as it reposes upon the annals of the past and upon the very general and very signal success of its sons, still it is grateful, as an obscure one of these, to come to its side with a public testimony to its merit; grateful to say, that whilst no dishonouring restraint was ever laid upon the action of its pupils, and no deceptive expedient ever practised to rob them of their time for the convenience of their teachers, that every thing, whether of discipline or instruction, was so ordered and enforced as to imbue them, as far as external agencies could imbue them, with sound knowledge, sound habits, and sound

principles of public and private duty. Especially gratifying is it to say, that however frequently in professed discourses for that purpose, the great truths of religion, with their solemn sanctions, and their legitimate claim to the regulation of life, were set forth and maintained; that however earnestly the *union of piety and learning* was inculcated as constituting the noblest result of human instruction, and as bringing into combination the purest elements of rectitude and power, yet that no system of particular theology was ever commended to their adoption, no sectarianism ever attempted to be fastened on their conscience. The irreversible claims of heaven were avowed—often and boldly avowed—but the mode of acknowledgment and submission was left to the heart and the judgment of the hearer. The spirit of party and proselytism was never here, but the provident and parental spirit which contemplated the thinking and undying portion of our nature, as having an interest in another condition of being, not to be forgotten or neglected in the preparations of this, was never absent: it pleaded for no creed, it enlisted for no school, it laboured for no sect, but it taught, it warned, it entreated, it pointed to the destinies of the coming day, and invoking the Father of all for the good of all, it trusted its bread to the waters, and cast out its plank for the rescue of the guilty and the drowning.

Were your anniversary to accomplish no more than the reunion of old friendships and the extension of new, it would accomplish in this way something to render the life happier and better. You cannot associate men as you do the *alumni*, with all the memories of the past brought down in gathered and affecting impression upon them, without carrying through all their moral emotions a decisive and elevating influence, you place them where the selfish principle, for a season, gives way; where they are drawn aside, insensibly, from the too separate and too entire concentration of the mind upon their peculiar interests and enjoyments; where a genial and a healthy atmosphere from without is breathed through the narrowest and sickliest cells of the heart. Surrounded whilst here with all that can awaken their sensibilities, or deepen upon them the truths of social duty and dependance, they go back with their patriotism and their benevolence refreshed, and

retire for the future into a wider circle of companionship and kindness, and a narrower one of prejudice, selfishness and aversion. Their country becomes dearer to them than before, because identified with an augmenting amount of personal attachments and an augmenting interest in her great systems of public amelioration, and they, in turn, become dearer to their country, because of that very multiplication of motives which confederate them more indissolubly than ever with her efforts and pledge them with increased responsibilities to her cause.

But there is another effect attaching to this anniversary which is distinct, important, and not partaken of by any other public assemblage. No where but here can the man, who has gone out upon the career of life from the instructions of this place, ever have his heart so sternly or so inexorably challenged to stand forth and to render up its honest account of that purest of all trusts—the trust of educated talent—which the college has bestowed upon him. Let the challenge be met with such brow and such courage as it may, its naked justice will tell upon the conscience, and its imperious demands will extort from that equitable judge a hearing and an answer. The noble trust, itself a faculty, with all of its conventional distinction, all of its vast unlimited power of command over the transactions and treasures of mind, and through these, over all the objects and systems of human enterprise and interest, has been committed to his hands; how profitably or how vainly, with what miserable or what ample avail for its magnificent uses, it is now for him, if never before, to feel and to acknowledge. Never does the responsibility of this confided faculty come over conscience with such ascendant and overawing control, as when he brings it back, after the interval and employment of years, and stands with it in the presence, the public presence, of the benefactor who gave it. Never does the call to self-examination and to trial for the full and faithful application of it, sweep over him with such a felt and subduing authority as then, norever does the heart, thrown loose at once from all its subterfuge and stratagem and pride, rise up so involuntarily or so honestly to respond and to confess. It may not shrink, it may not shudder, it may not weep over the poor and the scanty memorials on which its suffrage upon itself is to rest; but

he whose heart can exult, can triumph in its testimonies, can claim the perfect peace which perfect fidelity only can inspire, may hail himself as privileged and as blessed beyond the scope and the allotment of his fellows.

It is but yesterday—so vivid is the remembrance of that vivid hour that intervening years melt into moments—that all this gay and gladdening pageantry was for us; but yesterday that *we* stood upon this very spot as buoyant and as sanguine as the younger brotherhood around us, as eager and as armed as they for the encounter of life; cheered and guided onward, like themselves, to all its purposes and perils by benedictions and by counsels; and whilst the honoured guerdon of our youthful ambition—the spur and the belt of college knighthood—was publicly conferred, we too were adjured to receive it as pledging us before man and heaven to an unflinching career of fidelity and of service to both. Our going forth upon the labours of life was such as we have to-day: the greeting multitude, the fervid hope, the flattering augury, the promise and prediction of cultivated talent was all ours, and ours too the parent's and the patriot's prayer that for every faculty conferred upon us here, measure for measure should elsewhere be rendered to God and to our country. Such was our departure: what our return? Have we returned faithful in the administration of the fiduciary fund which was committed to our charge, or faithless and recreant, distinguished most, or distinguished only by the vestiges of the summers' suns that have burned upon us? Do we return rewarded and graced with memorials of achievement; with our pathway strewn over by the traces of the good we have done; with our hearts rejoiced, like those of wise and watchful husbandmen, at the rich and ripening fruits of our approaching autumn? Or come we hither with nothing but the sear and yellow leaf that tells of barrenness and decline? Only look at our thin and mutilated number, and see how fearfully "the breaker has gone up amongst them;" how many there are of those, who partook as deeply as ourselves of the animation of that day, who have been taken from the tribunals and the trials of earth, and have passed to accountabilities where faith only can follow them! But whilst we lament as to these that the *whole* of life is extinguished, have we no

reason to mourn over a part of our own as no less irrecoverably gone? Have we buried no years nor months of healthful and vigorous manhood, and that with a bereavement the bitterer and the more afflicting as no circumstance may survive to soften and hallow them to our memory? Some of you may have rightfully put forth your faculties in the very spirit for which they were given, and have benefited and bettered man by that holy property of knowledge which associates the public good in a constant union with every just and strenuous exercise of its cultivated power. Some of you there are who will, doubtless, be remembered, and be had in reverence by the world, who, in your various vocations, have plucked a pain from the body, a sorrow from the spirit; have guided the wayward with counsel, the wandering with light, or have stepped forth in some seasonable or exigent hour of your country's fortunes to brace and to build up, with a scholar's and a patriot's power, her edifice of freedom. But are there no others whose stewardship of education is a record only of upbraiding and sorrow and shame? No others who have shrunk with unmanly weakness from the fulfilment of its trusts, or with guilty and traitorous spirit have profaned them to purposes of evil! Are there none who have carried this noble power of instructed mind into a haughty and enervating and useless retirement, or who have thrown it away as a vain and glittering bauble, although it is that to which the guardianship of man is committed, that which elevates him above the clod of the valley, and approaches him almost to an angel's station? Are there none of you over whom friendship and justice have often cried out in lamentation as in reproach, "why liest thou upon thy face; get thee, oh, get thee up?" If, haply, there be none who mingles in this array as the blasted mingles with the wholesome ear; none who returns to this spot with even his solitary talent wrapped and folded up in the napkin in which he received it; none who comes with all his powers lopped away, shorn and sorrowing from the hands of some fatal Delilah; no judge upon this side the grave will so rejoice as that judge in the heart who sits and tries for all of us to-day the issues of the past. If there be, let him go hence and return again resolved to answer in repentance and in pain no more. Yea, let us all

profit of the consciousness and the teachings of this hour ; let us go back to the field of our unfinished labours with a bolder and better spirit, there to redeem to the uttermost our obligations to man and to heaven, and so to blend the trials of this life with the eternal issues of the next, that when our mortal agony shall come, it may find us in peace, our dying hour be disburdened of remorse, and our spirits, as we bow to the tomb, greeted with angel voice, calling to us from within and from above, "child of God, ascend to heaven."

Let it not be supposed by our younger friends, the under graduates of this institution, that our sympathies are so exhausted upon ourselves that we have no portion of them to spare for them and their condition. This can never be, as no situation can ever arouse a more commanding or a tenderer interest than yours. It is a situation most honoured for the honoured cause it involves, the public hopes it embodies ; dear to every one who knows its trials and who sympathises with the manly and the self-denying virtues it demands. Believe me, that a wide and watchful interest, comprehending every father and mother of the land, would be directed to your situation here, were it viewed apart from all intellectual results and regarded only as exhibiting upon a prominent theatre that most perilous of all moral contests, where a body of youth, thrown loose from a parent's observation and a parent's counsel, are left in the hot and riot season of the blood, with no other arms than their virtue, to contend and to grapple with temptation, fighting with his hundred hands, in one of the chosen seats (forbidden though it be) of his revel and his power. But there is another interest entertained in your behalf which is distinct from this, though no other can ever be higher or more generally felt. You are regarded as a part of that favoured and distinguished few who are to constitute hereafter the life-guard of letters ; to whom the lofty destiny is appointed of going the foremost in the march, directing and enlightening all others in the pathway and purposes of knowledge, as the convoy ship which gives pilotage and protection to the feebler vessels that follow in its wake. In this relation it is that the eye, the hope, the heart of the community, are upon you, and upon you with such intensity of observation and of

wish as might well arouse, were it necessary, your own sense of duty and achievement. Your acquisitions, and your rejoicings on account of them, are in truth the acquisitions and rejoicings of the public, that public too which will feel for your failures, should any unhappily arise, some portion of that humiliation and disappointment, whose heavier and bitterer part will be reserved to wound and crush the feelings of those, the most revered and loved of yourselves, who, of all others upon earth, have the holiest claims upon you to be saved and sheltered from such sorrow. Distinguished, therefore, by elevated and peculiar responsibilities as is your situation here, you will bear, I trust, with a suggestion or two, however obvious they may be, as to the means of securing its advantages the most permanently and surely.

As one of these means, let it be urged upon you never to regard your college education as a mere embellishment of the mind, but always as an active and reproducing power of it; never as a merely graceful accompaniment, qualifying you to enter with ease and zest into the elegant gratifications of genius and taste, but as a new or supplemental faculty, so wrought into the texture and substance of all the other faculties, as to strengthen and harden them all for increased usefulness and increased exertion. There is so frequent a tendency to the merely ornamental in college education, and a tendency which is oftentimes so disguised as to be neither suspected nor felt, that the most habitual vigilance is scarcely sufficient to detect or arrest it. Whenever the mind is unwilling to enter into communion or into action with its own thoughts; whenever it becomes impossible without pain and constraint upon it to abstract it from its prescribed subjects of exercise and study, and engage it, however briefly, in the laborious exercise of its own powers; whenever it relapses from this exercise wearied or disgusted with the task, and recurs to it with increasing and still increasing reluctance; whenever this is the case, be assured either that your education (which is, substantially, the faculty of the mind to control itself) has not been begun, or that the symptoms of a diseased one are upon you; that the process of unsuspected enervation is going on, and that you are in danger of permitting the chosen means for invigorating

the mind to be so perverted as to fasten indolence, weakness and dependance upon your own. Mistake not for education that excitement or animation of mind which the exercise of your literary taste may produce. No such light and transitory impulse to mental pleasure or reflection can any more supply the place of those severe and painful exercises of analysis and induction, by which only the mind is trained to a full developement and control of its powers, than the spasmodic excitement of exhilarating gas can supply the healthier and homelier fare that nourishes the springs of animal life. The higher, indeed, the strength and the capacity for labour and action into which the mind can be educated, the better does the state of it consist with the graces and gratifications of the lighter tastes, just as the strongest columns give surer support to the parasite plants that hang and wreath themselves in ornament upon them. But admirable as may be those lighter tastes when found in fellowship with the strongest powers, as the twin products of the same cultivation, they are comparatively valueless, if not worse, when found by themselves : they may still in some sort embellish, but it is as the hectic flush which brightens on the cheek of disease, and which only beautifies, for a moment, the fatal ruin it reveals. Betray not yourselves into the folly of pursuing the embellishments of education separate from its utilities, nor fill your minds with the vain and misguiding phantasy of a lettered and dignified repose ; but fill them with manly purposes of energy and exertion, and labour to bring them, by every means within your reach, into the solid and hardy texture which shall fit them for exposure to all weathers, and for the wear and tear, the rugged work of all employments. Look to your education at all times in its double aspect of a *power and a trust*, a power providentially placed in your hands, but in trust for the good of others as for yourselves, that thus you may have an early and habitual and adequate appreciation of its obligations and its worth! Only settle it, in your own judgment, upon this just and comprehensive basis, and its responsibilities will be enforced upon you by the calls of a double duty; its delinquencies forbidden as involving the crime and curse of a double treason, a treason to yourselves and to society. Cast from you,

then, the besotted yet besetting folly of making it only the dreamy companion of the closet, the elegant and honoured guest of the drawing-room, and seize upon it as the great instrument which is appointed of heaven to the hardest and the noblest service, the improvement and subjugation of the world ; the only one which elevates where it conquers ; which achieves its victories without blood, and gathers in its trophies from land to land amid the shout of human blessings, and without the stain of a human tear.

Let it be urged upon you, as a cardinal maxim in mental education, always to study and to labour for results ; never to be satisfied upon any subject submitted to your examination, until you shall have followed it up and thought it out to its simplest elements. Only establish this analytical habit of reducing all subjects to their constituent parts, and of thus estimating them in their simple as well as compounded form, and you will be speedily rewarded with rapid perception, with sound judgment, with ripe and vigorous powers of investigation and of reasoning. No other habit makes the mind so rich, so ready, so practical, nor does any other conduct its operations with such entire fidelity, or challenge for its decisions so safe and habitual a confidence. Science itself, as you well know, is but a collection of final truths, a body of established results : the more nearly then we bring our current subjects of investigation and interest, where the nature of them will admit, to like results by like methods, the better will we understand them, and the more closely shall we approximate the whole volume of our knowledge to the certainties and the value of demonstrated truth. But let this habit of mind be neglected and left unestablished, and indecision, inaccuracy and confusion of thought inevitably follow ; the ideas become little better than the spectral groupings of the camera obscura, shadowy, dim, fantastic, disproportioned, and the whole mind for every purpose of prompt and judicious action, above all, for every purpose of energetic practical action, is made weaker and poorer by its unavailable accumulations of power and wealth. It is needless to say that this habit comes only of much and wearisome labour, and that to expect it, or expect any thing else that is valuable in life to be otherwise derived, is the folly

of the dotard and the child, the *mirage* of the credulous and dreaming sluggard, and as fatal in its illusion, though far more voluntary, than that of the desert, which mocks the fainting traveller to disappointment and to death by the sight and sound of ideal waters. If in relation to this or to other objects of attainment which make up your purposes and duties here, you pause and doubt and stretch forth a feeble and hesitating hand, and approach your labours with sinking heart or averted eye, be assured that you palter with yourselves, that you covenant with impotence and shame and disappointment, that you plunder your country of its rightful expectations, and throw from your own possession a far more legitimate power over the treasures of this world as well as of the next, than ever was symbolled to catholic faith by the key or the crown of St. Peter. Labour is the inexorable and unchanging law under which every faculty must be brought if you would rise above the ignominy of helpless and dishonoured life ; but inexorable as it is, if it rules you with a tyrant's power, it blesses you with a parent's benefactions. It has been decreed against man, as his eternal doom, that he should live only by the "sweat of his brow;" against the serpent, that it should crawl "and eat of the dust of the earth all of the days of its life." Choose ye, therefore, between the alternatives ordained by providence itself: work, as it is the doom of man to do, and take with it all the prerogatives and glories of man ; work not, as is the doom of the serpent, and take, with this imagined indulgence, the crawling, trampled and loathed condition of your reptile enemy.

Suggestions connected with your avocations and duties so crowd upon the mind, that whilst it would be improper to enlarge, it is difficult to retrench. You have all read the story of the royal Attila breaking with his hungry and brutal horde over the defences of imperial Rome, trampling her refinements and institutions in the dust, and extinguishing the last and the pale light which still shone from the capitol for the guidance and renovation of man. You have read it, and have burned with impatient and indignant anger at the rapacious and the conquering savage, but did you feel how inexpressibly baser than he, was the degraded and the sunken Roman, who quailed

and shrunk and stooped to the blow which ravaged and ruined his country? It was a noble trophy to the pride of the brave but ruthless Goth to smite so illustrious an enemy to the earth, and to brandish his gleaming sword in shouts of triumph over the "eternal city," as the hero and the master of its fate. The darker and deeper infamy of the tragedy must ever rest upon the degenerate Roman, who lifted up as he was above all others by freedom and letters, yet recked not of their inspiration, but crouched, cowered and sunk in his own consecrated temples of liberty and war, and wore the brand and bandage of a slave amongst the monuments and in the presence of his glory. Take the Attila of the story as the striking and pictured representative of that ignorant and savage spirit which wars against the attainments and the institutions of learning; the impotent and degraded Roman, as the recreant son of education, who meets the fury and the waste of his ruffian antagonist by a craven, heartless and futile resistance. Whenever, then, you look upon the region of letters and of thought, and mourn over the invasions of ignorance within it, turn your wrath upon the traitor sentinel who abandons the posts and preparations of defence. Be faithful, therefore, to your trust, and never share in the reproach of having betrayed the city or the temple whose lights you have enjoyed, and for whose protection and defence you are set. So act as man and scholar, that you may come up from these halls of learning and these years of temptation, without a want to your usefulness or a wound upon your name, with powers which need nothing but a theatre for service, and a character which, like the rock at Megara, whereupon the lyre of Apollo was laid, shall send forth its notes of sweetness and melody from whatever side it be touched.

To you who have just received the ceremonial seal, which closes your connexion with the college, and which accredits you with honourable testimony to the world, this hour, glad as it is in the exulting sense of independence which it inspires, is the beginning one of more anxious and solemn consequence than any other that has opened upon you. It is an hour which advances you to undertakings and duties which, whether considered in reference to mind or character, outmeasure by far,

in complication and importance, any other to which you have yet been called. The gown, with all the responsibilities and obligations of manhood, is taken to-day. The rubicon of youth is passed, and is now behind you: the battle of life stands ready before. The quiet harbour, where you have been ministered to for years in gentleness and peace, is now quit, and you are launched upon the wave of the wide sea, where your pilotage and success must be such as heaven and your own good heart shall supply. At this moment, which is always one of rejoicing, follow what may, when the restraints of impatient pupilage are taken away, and the heart leaps forward to busy life as to a revel and a feast; at this moment to read you over the lessons of a grey and care-worn experience is, in some sort you may think, to exhibit anew the mystic hands and the mystic words upon the wall, the skeleton finger and the boding motto, calling up only images of gloom unseasonably to dim the ruby of your cup, unkindly to check the joy of your banquet. Rather imagine that as you are no Belshazzars to tremble at prophetic revealings, and I no sage or seer to announce them, that some words not of gloom, but of soberness and truth, may even now be spoken which may benefit and aid you when this festal hour shall have gone. So presuming, let it be said, that if you would acquire firmness, elevation and weight of character at the very outset in life, if you would impart to the mind the whole of that consistency and vigor of which it is susceptible, and would crown all these virtues by reputation and by profit, then choose at once the profession or pursuit to which you intend to be attached, and embody all your energies in preparation for it. Choose candidly, upon thorough examination of yourself, but choose promptly. Decline to do so, loiter away a year or two of the most precious period of your lives in the vain and voluntary self-delusion that you are wisely exercising your judgment with observation and reading and facts, that you may decide at last with the better discretion; do this, as thousands have done to their sorrow, and not only will the tone and courage of your mind abate, and all of its faculties gradually give way under the abandonment of its accustomed discipline, but innumerable conjectures of hypothetical evil will fill it, and visionary reasons for further and further delay

will spring up in afflicting abundance on every side of you, to postpone and perplex your decision. Every moment not imperatively demanded by the necessities of self examination and an intelligent survey of the general operations of society, every one beyond this, which is spent under the deceptive pretence of deliberation and inquiry, only aggravates your perplexity and distress, and will ultimately fasten upon your mind the distempered and incurable habit of halting and indecision. You may search and search and be no more profited withal than the inquiring and eccentric hermit who roamed through the world, looking in all its paths with a candle in his hand for an honest man, but retired at last, wearied, disappointed and disheartened to his cell, where, as the fable reads, he renounced his hopes, extinguished his torch, and died in despair. Let all waywardness and caprice be dismissed from your choice, and your plan of life be definitely settled, and it is amazing to see how instantaneous is that firmness and energy which result to the mind from this single act of concentrating its purposes and powers. But delay and delay, and as no system of life is adopted, or adopted in time, your self-control, your sense of personal value, your efficiency and your promptitude of decision are all lost : your struggles to live, to act, to play your part in society as might become you, insensibly but inevitably dwindle down into a petty and contemptible shuffle of daily expedients ; and repentance, mortification, disappointment, to say nothing of positive and resulting vices, oftentimes follow after to bring up in mournful array the procession of life.

The idea of a *gentlemanly* acquaintance, as it is called, with all subjects of liberal knowledge, without committal to the supposed drudgery of pursuing any one of them professionally or laboriously, is native to the region of a college, and is in truth, one of those dangerous hallucinations which oftentimes haunt, with more than the power or the mischief of sorcery, the minds of sprightly and speculative young men. The reign of it, however, would be short and comparatively harmless, were it not occasionally favored by those external circumstances of wealth which the youthful possessor so often and so ruinously interprets into a full discharge from all the labours of life, and into a title-deed to all of its blessings and enjoyments. Let all

such especially beware of the fascinations and tendencies of this delusive idea : let them spurn it away as a counsellor and emissary of evil, as a false and profligate adviser, who would persuade them, with demon logic, to convert their means and faculties for service into motives and instruments for uselessness and sloth. Never permit property, though it should pour in upon you in constant and unebbing stream, to decoy you by its soft persuasives from the hardy and practical uses of education ; but make it the rather give weight and power to that education, just as the grosser metal which forms the body of the woodsman's axe, is made by him to give weight and power to the finer steel which is fitted on the edge. If inherited wealth takes you from the labours of the field, and education does not equip you for those of the mind, you are lost, in both, to the productive uses of society, and you abuse, through both, the highest faculties for service which its institutions can secure. Be your circumstances what they may, forget not that that life is most acceptable to God, which being first most submissive to Him, is after that, most useful to man.

Out of the representative structure of our government, and, out of that perfect dependance upon the capabilities of the general mind which it requires, there arises to every American citizen—above all—to every educated one, the imperative duty of combining, with his preparations for private life, some preparation at least, for those public trusts to which in some form, it is both his right and obligation to contribute. No view or estimate of duty to an educated citizen could be poorer or humbler or more wretchedly mistaken in the latitude or comprehensiveness of its objects, than that which does not place what he owes to his country side by side with that which he owes to himself. And this view, which is the true one, acquires a yet loftier and more inspiring character, when that country itself is regarded as discharging a duty not limited to its own citizens, but experimental in its results upon the interests of the world ; as in the very midst of a problem auspicious in its prosecution thus far to the hopes of deceived, oppressed, misgoverned man—a problem, whose great issue is destined to prove, whether that government which is the freest is not at the same time, the strongest and the best for all the purposes

of regulated freedom; whether the largest possible amount of national happiness and power is not always built up on the largest amount of civil and individual liberty. Whilst every freeman amongst us, being a unit of the government, is pledged to the issue of a problem so affecting, by its immeasurable results, the expectations and the destinies of millions, upon you nevertheless, and upon others of kindred condition, who have partaken the most deeply of the benefits of the government, and will, doubtless, share the most largely in its representative functions, devolves more justly and eminently than upon all beside, the burden and the responsibility of its success. From whom else could such aid so properly and so efficiently come? The help required is that which statesmen can render the best, and where, but to our public institutions of learning, as so many nurseries for that purpose, are our statesmen to be looked for? those who are such in all the worth and glory of the title, whether their wisdom sheds its light only in the daily offices and intercourse of men, or whether it be appropriated by their countrymen, and thus be made to brighten, to guide, and to bless in the senate. It is to these institutions we look, nor have we looked in vain. They have often given us their supplies, have given us men who are amongst the honoured and venerated of the world; who have aided to fix the landmarks of mind for the age, and have earned, by their genius and their services, an undying record in a nation's heart. You are to follow—you too are to come up to the help of your country, and when you do come, the hope and the prayer of all is, that it may be with the enlightened head and the bold heart, and the consecrating patriotism which, combining to place you amongst the foremost in capacity, shall place you, also, amongst the foremost in usefulness and honour. Without hereditary office, or entailed inheritance, or any other of those artificial arrangements which throw a government upon distinct classes of society, either by positive appointment or by necessary effect, without any of these but independently of them all, our government stands where it pleases heaven that man himself should stand, upon the simple and natural footing of intelligence and virtue. Mind, cultivated and virtuous mind, is the only fountain of legitimacy to the government or of rank to the citizen.

A Persian Caliph pointed to his scymetar and his soldiers as the true and proper arbiters of disputed succession: this, said he, is my pedigree, and these its supporters and its proofs. America, with a more heaven-directed spirit, points to the morals and the mind of her sons—both regulated and both enlightened—as the only sure and equitable ground work of public or private authority. And it is in you that these qualities are expected to be found, upon you, in part, that your country depends for their possession and their exercise. Nourish your understandings, therefore, for the duties that are before you, and when you enter upon them, forget not that they are public duties, that as such they are never to be confounded with personal objects nor profaned to the unholy end of pampering a vain, selfish, or profligate ambition. Public offices are trusts, pure trusts; conferred in faith for the general weal, and opposed throughout the whole range of their intendments, to all the purposes of individual advantage. To pursue them, therefore, as being in any respect whatsoever the proper subjects of traffic or private emolument—to clutch at and seize upon and apply them as the just acquisition of personal booty, is in reality to perpetrate a robbery; a robbery more wicked and worse than that which classic fable has punished with the naked rock and the gnawing vulture; nay, it is to commit simony against the state, only less criminal and less accursed in itself than that simony against heaven, which would have purchased its gifts and its powers to dishonour, defile and destroy them.

In this connexion with the subject of public trusts it is not inopportune to add, that as all of them, however varied their relations, depend at last upon the application, in some form or other, of the popular sovereignty of our government, so therefore as a just inference from the proposition, you should never entertain a derisive or contemptuous opinion of the aggregate popular understanding. This understanding is at one and the same moment, the inceptive and the corrective power of the government, so that to impeach it habitually by a sneering and scoffing under-estimate of its value, is, in fact, habitually to weaken and waste the vital energy of the government itself, with that of all the interests and institutions it upholds. But a

low estimate of that understanding is not only a *malum prohibitum*, as being contradictory of the positive principle of the government, it is a *malum per se*—not only a wrong, because subversive of the very foundations on which we stand, but a wrong in fact, a false opinion, the more mischievous because often inhering, like a flaw in the diamond, in the minds of educated men. It is, as you well know, upon the higher or lower estimate of the popular understanding, as upon a graduated scale, that we have had, in all ages, many of those varieties of liberty and restriction which distinguish the different governments of the world—from the republic, where the whole body of civil freedom is entrusted to collective man as its only safe and natural depository, up through every modification of artificial restraint, to that perfect despotism which invests its custody in the robber sovereign, who has plundered and wrenched it from the people. In the midst of your own freedom, cheering and vivifying to us all as the sun in his brightness, beware lest you cherish opinions ruinous of the principles which secure it, and congruous only with the fundamental and fatal doctrines—the unrighteous and impious dogmas of those governments which restrain and destroy it. Whatever the inlet amongst educated men of an undervaluing opinion of the popular mind ; whether to be found in the habitual and exclusive study for years of no other than the highest models of the human intellect, and in the contempt thus insensibly and gradually developed for every marked degree of inferior capacity or cultivation ; whether to be found in this or some other source, it is an error—a gross and pernicious error, as a free intermixture with the great mass of our general population will abundantly demonstrate. Go to this mass, you will not see the refinements of education, the rich and deep alluvion which it has poured out upon the college mind, but you will see a clear sighted and vigorous and over-mastering common sense, imperfectly aided indeed, but still awakened into general and powerful activity, not only sustaining at this moment the government and all its institutions, but sustaining, and directing also a diversity, a complication, and a magnitude of private business, which is wholly unequalled amongst equal numbers of any other people upon earth. Go and strip the

coarse and the homely covering from off the general mind of our countrymen, as the South American hunter, by accident, stripped from the mountain side the shrub, which showed, under the concealment of its roots, whole quarries of gold, and though you may meet not, as he did, with the glittering ore which purchased for ages nothing but impotence and sorrow and bonds for the country of its native home, yet you will meet with an iron intellect—an intellect of that rugged and better metal which, wherever it be found, whether in the heads or the hands of a people, alike protects them against poverty and against power. Let therefore every prejudiced conception of the popular capacity, should you entertain any, be cast from you at once and forever as doubly unjust, unjust to your countrymen, unjust to yourselves—as resting upon a wrong in judgment—ending in a wrong in results, contributing to destroy all sympathy between you, and at last perfecting its injustice and its injury by driving you, it may be, with whatever fitness you may have, from the public service of your country. The very beginning of such a prejudice too, should be received with the greater distrust, as it is one of the melancholy facts of history that learned men, as a body, have never been distinguished amongst the Hampdens, and the Henrys, and the Sydneys of mankind: yea, a melancholy truth, that comparatively common men, acting upon the inextinguishable principles and feelings of nature, have conquered and maintained the rights which the sage and the scholar, acting upon the abstractions of the closet, have discountenanced or denounced as pernicious or forbidden.

In the party struggles which are incident, of necessity, to the organization of our political system, the safety-valve of the system itself, and that which has hitherto been relied upon with success, is placed in the firmness, intelligence and unpurchaseable honesty of our general population. In every contest then to which your duty or your feelings may commit you, resolve, at all hazards, to remain honest both to yourselves and to your country, and so imbue your minds with the inexpressible value of this one patriot quality, in sustaining the great ends of your government, and stripping party of all that is pernicious in its power, that when you are put upon that most painful and most

generous exercise of it to which you can be put—the sacrifice, namely, of your party ties for conscience and for country's sake—you may find it easy to your disciplined and determined virtue. Party of itself is no necessary evil, and let those who look upon it in this light, and who bewail the wrangles and the jealousies and the ignoble acts by which it is oftentimes distinguished, let them remember that they but lament over other forms of common and inherited frailty. In its worst shape, it has never yet been more than “the rust of our system,” which free action has always brushed away. And despite of all the phantasms and the dogmas upon this subject, which closet philosophy or political scepticism may engender and proclaim to affright or to teach us, who will dare to say that the purest aristocracies and the noblest privileged classes which man has ever seen, were not more completely the slaves of selfish influences and passions, having nothing in common with the public good, than the most degenerate and untutored populace they ever despised or oppressed? It has pleased heaven, in its wisdom, to commit to every man his eternal interests, as being the safest and best depository of them, for himself: and if there is one lesson which reason and history, properly consulted, teach more emphatically than another, it is the one analogous to this, if indeed it be not a part of it, that man too is the best depository of his temporal rights—that these are always safest when held and guarded by himself. In no age, however blind or corrupt it be, have we one solitary instance of a whole people *wilfully* undoing themselves. But how many and by how horrible expedients of punishment and perjury and wrong, have been wilfully and cruelly ruined and undone by their rulers!

The party excesses which now and then have distinguished our political contests, have thus far broken and exploded upon our system, only as the meteoric lights which glare and terrify for a moment, and then break and explode upon the earth, without jostling or impeding in the least its onward and its massive movement.

There are one or two views of duty arising from the influence and effect, both domestic and exterior, of the federative principle of our system, which, though familiar perhaps to you all, are yet important and may well be urged upon your earnest

regards. Look at this system in all of its extent, and you will see that every analysis to which it can be subjected will prove that no other one is more difficult to be abused to violent ends, or, when abused, more easily restored to sound and to wholesome action—incapable therefore of tyranny, and when entrusted to its own provisions, easily capable of self-adjustment. Nay, farther, a full analysis will show that no other system can do so much as it can, *if administered upon its established principles*, to advance the purposes of knowledge and civilization, because no other combines such a multitude of separate centres, each one of which, within itself, gives increased activity to every thing, thereby adding to the power of all human movements, and each one affording, in times of trial or distress, a refuge and a shelter from the errors and misfortunes of all the rest. But these general results are deduced, not exclusively indeed, but mainly from the postulate that the federal bond is secure. Here in this bond—in the concentration or the hostility of power it involves—we have both the strength and the weakness of our system. This is, therefore, precisely the controlling and the vital point, which the patriotism and the wisdom of all are most required to cherish and defend. If we judge from the general principles of national intercourse and action, or from the ordinary, well understood, and unchangeable passions of the human heart, no other within the whole range of political events is more probable, if not more demonstrable, than this, that whensoever the federal union be dissolved, be it by consent or by violence, and the several states which compose it be re-arranged into smaller confederacies, or formed into separate and integral commonwealths, the present peaceful and happy relations amongst them will be progressively, perhaps immediately, changed into relations of jealousy, enmity, altercation, and war. Look at their immense inequalities of geographical advantage and of physical power; at the dangerous and tempting vicinity of the weak to the strong; at their long lines of border connexion, with the innumerable provocatives and facilities to every species of trespass, and of jurisdictional evasion and complaint, which these must always afford: look at the lakes and the bays and the rivers intervening amongst them, the noble bonds of peace because of interest

and prosperity now, but then the never-failing sources of quarrel, because of contested rights and privileges of navigation—above all, look at the radical and disaffecting differences which inhere in their respective habits and texture of society, and you have in all these a mass of elements which, however providentially and beneficently harmonized under our federal head, could generate nothing else, amongst separate states, than jealousy, repugnance, irritation and bloodshed. Whenever border aggression, or any other of the thousand causes of war which national folly or wrong is ever at hand to supply, shall bring up actual hostilities between these separated states, then the evil hour of them all has come, and their after fortunes will be little else than variations of struggle, of agony and woe. Let war be threatened or felt, and all of its muniments, its levies of money and men, its garrisons and armies and navies will have to be provided, and provided the more lavishly in our case, from the proximity of the parties and their vast accessibilities to mutual and to vital attack. This demand for military means, thus heightened by the extraordinary exposure of the parties, must conduct sooner or later, as under less evident necessity it has conducted every where else, to that readiest and fatallest of all expedients to supply it—the expedient of a standing army—which itself can never be resorted to in our case, without requiring the organization of a new and more powerful, if not absolute executive to create and command it. With wars and standing armies and supreme executives, what of national liberty would we have left to live or to hope for? Only separate from one another, and you will march upon one another; you will fight and struggle until your struggle reaches the point of national existence, and then your strong foundations of freedom will be overthrown; the limitations and the safeguards which guarantee it now will be given up as a last and mournful sacrifice for safety; state after state will sink under the ruffian rule of the camp, until some American Maximin or American Alexander, conquering all, shall again consolidate all, and shall stamp his heel into that throbbing heart which beats and burns, at the present hour, with so pure a sense of human liberty, and glows with so rich a hope of renovating the people and the governments of the world.

But the range and the horrors of this catastrophe do not terminate with ourselves; they comprehend the interests and the hopes, if not the fate, of other millions than our own, and thus involve them, in eminent degree, in the preservation of that beneficent bond which only can prevent it. It is a part of the praise and the strength and the glory of our country, that her hands have impelled the progress, and her institutions sustained all that is pure in the free principles, of popular revolution. If you would measure the dignity of the demands of this national position, look abroad at the onward and overwhelming movement of the free or popular principle of government; see it portending at this very moment, not the vast extension merely, but *peradventure* the entire empire of democracy. Philosophy herself, as she calmly reads, upon the horoscope of nations, the shadowy presages of their fate, no longer recoils and disowns this ultimate result as the dream of enthusiasm. Her wisest followers begin to assume and to avouch it as inevitable—begin to see and to believe, as progressive events hasten to their issue, and bring into open view the parent causes from which they descend, that the revolutionary movement of the day, in behalf of the popular principle, is no new and no startling phenomenon in politics, but, in truth, is a part of the most ancient and uniform and permanent tendency of any which history exhibits—a sort of providential decree, universal, enduring, baffling all the efforts of man to check or to limit its control. No where, however, has this popular principle, now advancing to its just supremacy, ever received either full development or peaceable development but here, and no where either do the hopes or expectations of others upon this subject, turn with eagerness or with confidence but to us. Thus doubly connected, by illustration and by sympathy, with the progress of this great principle, our country, as a consequence, stands as a parent at the head of it, and at the head of all its revolutions; responsible as a parent for the wisdom and the prudence which may yet be wanting to the full and the redeeming glories of its perfect triumph. It is for us, who are so proudly stationed, and who too were gathered in our infancy from every people, to build up and maintain amongst ourselves an impregnable stronghold from which

streams of religion and freedom and knowledge shall flow back again, to fertilize and to gladden the regions from which our fathers and our blessings came. It is for us to see that the banner of our republic shall wave over an undivided empire—an empire as unparalleled in its extent as in the wisdom and the justice and the humanity of its institutions. Excelling all others in regulated liberty as our country does, so too let it excel all others in holy efforts to perpetuate the felicity which it was raised up of Heaven to exemplify, and to hallow, through all time, the principles it has rendered immortal. The nations who follow in our steps, whose confidence and dependance rest upon us as their great example, call upon us to beware—to be true as bold. The poor and broken-hearted and down-trodden man, as he looks up from under the despotism which veils him in with its covering of cloud, pours forth his prayer to the Father of all, as he weeps for himself, that ours may be the radiant and the steady course which shall never bewilder or betray. And so, join him in his prayer that it shall be. Let the millions of the wretched and the oppressed of all lands still look with certainty to us for guidance and relief; still stretch out their hands unto us as they stand upon their shores, and hail our country as the life-boat of liberty to the world—as the little ark which is destined of heaven, in this latter day, to bear, for the renewal of man, the choicest of its treasures through all the dangers of tempest and of deluge. And yet a scroll—a prophet's scroll of lamentations and tears and woe, may proclaim to the world that we too are fallen and gone. But smitten, crushed, crumbled into atoms though we may be, yet now, now, thank God we can never, never die. We may sink as others have sunk, overwhelmed by that relentless and dread succession which sweeps whole nations to the grave; the young and the bold heart of this republic, proudly as it rejoices in the beauty of its heritage, and the promise of its days, may pass away with all perishable things, but our name, our example, our mind, our spirit, will live forever to enlighten, improve, and bless the world. The spirit of our laws, let superstition and ignorance and power do what they list to destroy it, will abide upon the earth as the redeeming spirit of after times, and shall pass from hand to hand, like the

inextinguishable fire of the Grecian temples, till all the nations be filled with its brightness.

Yet immortal as it shall be, let us be instructed by the monitory voice that comes to us from all the records of all the past—from every age and every land; and comes to tell us, *that lost republics are lost forever*; that though their spirit never dies to others, *it never revives, when lost, to regenerate themselves*. Look at the tiger and the reptile as they have dwelt for ages in the habitations of the Holy City; look at despotism, worse than either, as it has nestled and brooded with its raven wing upon the very bosom of buried republics, and be warned of that mysterious doom—that evident ordination from on high, which connects, in eternal fellowship, the privileges with the punishments of nations, which never allots the highest blessings but side by side with the heaviest woes. Be warned by this fated conjunction to put away all passion and parricide from amongst us—to gather and press to the side of your country—to heal the chafings and the wounds of her spirit by the fervour and the unity of yours—to sacrifice and to suffer when need be, that she may neither sorrow nor perish; and if there be a curse in all the land, let it abide for the overwhelming of him who cometh not up to succour, to defend, and to save. Yes, for the overwhelming of him and such as him, for where, under providence, but upon the heart—the constant and devoted heart—where but upon the patriotism and the virtue of her sons is the country to rely against the corruption of her own mighty elements of good into mighty engines of evil. I call upon you then, as you would cling to that country, and would bear her onward in her great career, that you cherish these sacred principles, the very life-blood of her peace as well as of her faculties and her hopes. Such and so fervent be your devotion to her welfare as that which glowed in the heart of the younger Pitt, and of our own Adams, who, in the midst of their agonies, forgot not the countries they had lived for, but mingled with the spasms and the sorrows of the dying hour, a last and imploring appeal to the Parent of mercies, that he would remember, in eternal blessings, the land of their birth. Such be your devotion as that of the young enthusiast of Paris, who, listening to Mirabeau, in

one of his noble vindications of human rights, and seeing him fall from his stand, dying, as the physician proclaimed, for want of blood, rushed to the spot, bared his arm for the lancet, and cried again and again with impassioned utterance, "take it—oh, take it from me—let me die, so that Mirabeau and the liberties of my country may not perish."

I shall be pardoned, I trust, by this audience, already taxed too long, for introducing, in connexion with this view of a patriot's duty, and as an appropriate appendage to it, a closing remark upon an all-engrossing and all-pervading subject, which deeply, intensely, and sternly involves it—a subject which, though it takes hold more immediately and more totally of the peculiar interests and structure of southern population, yet, in its final issues, interweaves itself indissolubly with the peace and the hopes and the destinies of us all. If it is ever important to consider it with admonitory reference to its inevitable and its dread results, it is at this moment, above all others the most important, whilst the public mind is ruminating upon it, and before any violent or any irrevocable act has thrust it out from the forum of reason, to be discussed and decided upon the field of battle. It is now, if ever, when a threatening frown scowls and lowers upon its front, that evidence should be heard, lest an unwary judgment should let loose the sword to "slay the man that is thy fellow." Who here that asks—who here that needs to be told that abolition is the subject meant; that subject of monster omen, though *perchance* of pious birth—which fostered and forwarded with a wild and explosive energy, has been made to tower above every interest of party, and above every measure of policy, by putting into contest the very body and being of the state. Passing by the questions of theology and morals and constitutional power and private right which have been embodied with this subject, I have this only to say which my southern position, and, therefore, my keener apprehension, both as witness and victim of all its results, will enable me to say—that if it be pushed onward by those who are locally foreign to its interests and its dangers, until it becomes the efficient and admitted cause of some insurgent ebullition, it will be the parent, not only of unutterable calamities to *us*, but of certain, irretrievable and

bloody undoing to themselves and to all. Let those amongst you who choose, bewail the existence of slavery as a maelstrom in the bosom of southern society, if they but touch it with pragmatical, with forbidden and infatuated hand, they render it a maelstrom to engulph the Union. Be adjured, therefore, by the weal of this and coming ages; by our own and our childrens' good—by all that we have and all that we hope for in the glories of our land, to leave this subject of slavery, with every accountability it may impose, every remedy it may require, every accumulation of difficulty or of pressure it may reach—leave it all to the interest and the wisdom and the conscience of those upon whom the providence of God and the constitution of your country have cast it. Leave it to them *now and forever*, and stop, before stop is impossible, the furious headway of that destructive and mad philanthropy which is lighting up for the nation itself the fires of the stake, which is rushing on, stride after stride, to a strife and a woe that may bury us all under a harder and wickeder slavery than any it would extinguish. Nothing but bitterness—nothing but aggravation of heart and of lot has been brought upon that unfortunate man whom rash and pernicious attempts—the promptings of this blinded and baleful spirit—have been put forth to benefit. They have broken down the footing he had reached, crushed the sympathies he had won, embarrassed and accursed the fortunes they were interposed to control. The generous and elevating influence of our free institutions was relaxing his bondage, bettering his condition, lifting up his character, turning upon him the public anxieties and the public councils as a great object of provident and public provision—was changing at all points the aspects of his fate, when a spirit, sent of heaven as it insanely imagined, came from abroad, to scourge him with demon visitation; to wrench him from the arms of his only true and only capable benefactors—to throw him back again upon the earth a thousand fold more suspected and more separated than before; rivetting upon him every fetter it would loosen—poisoning every blessing it would bestow, and filling his whole case with elements of hopelessness, explosion and evil, which the heart sorrows whilst it shudders to think upon. Why, then, persist? Why abet the growth or the daring or

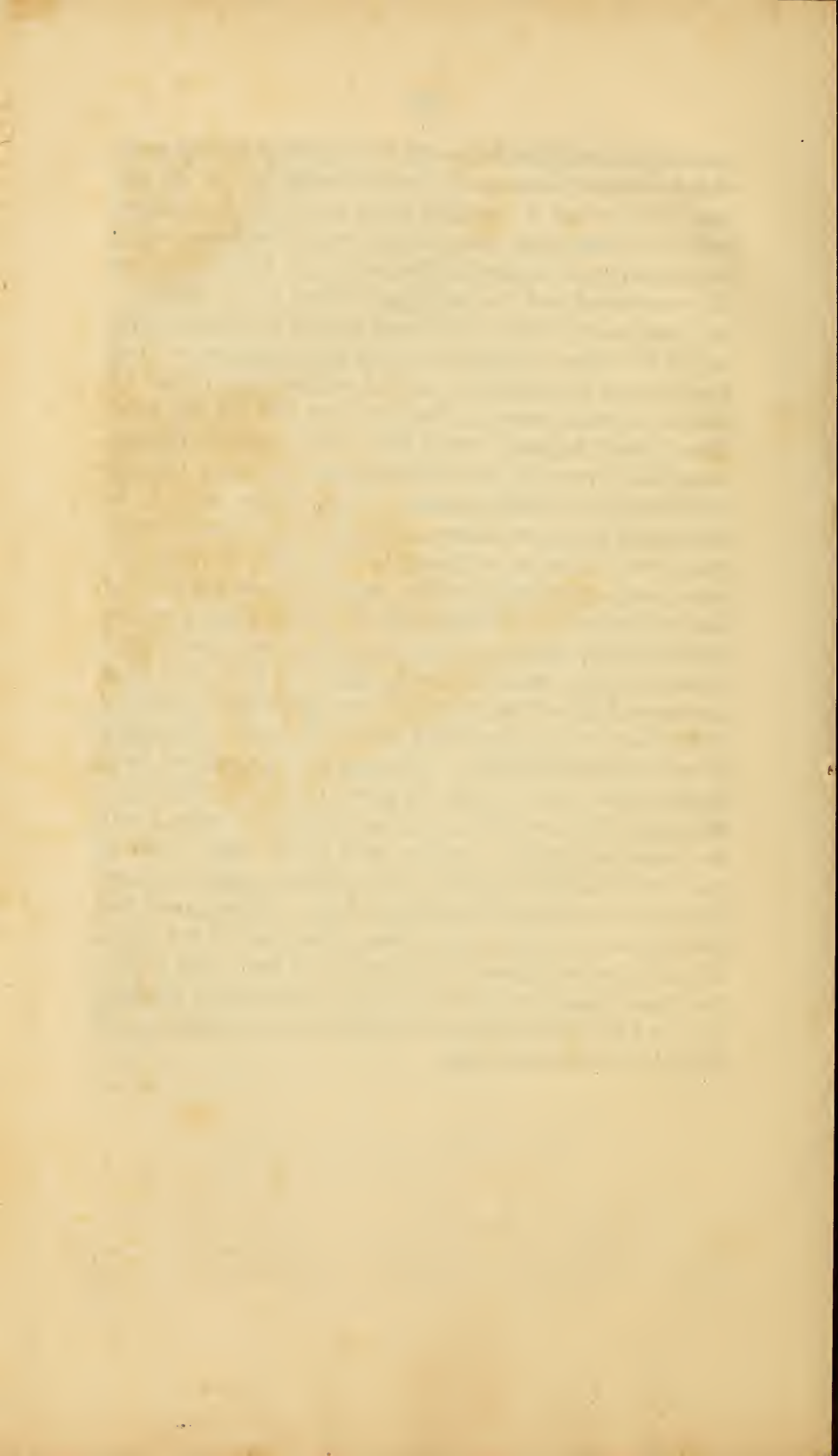
the power of a spirit which wisdom and mercy plead to you with all their tongues, to silence and to stop? Will any daughter in this assembly, the cherished and defended of a parent's love, blessed to the uttermost with the holy peace of perfect security—sheltered to the uttermost from the apprehension and the approach of every wrong, with no enemy to dread—no hand to injure—no terror to affright—safe in her repose, safe in her innocence at every hour and in every place—will she do that, which, all-valueless for its objects, will yet be all-powerful to send wakefulness and watching and danger and anguish, perchance, to the days and the nights—to the summer shade as well as to the barred and bolted chamber of her southern sister? Will any mother here, as she soothes her infant to its rest, and looks upon its balmy sleep, and pressing it to her heart, bows in gratitude to God for his mercies to her child—thanking him that its life is safe—safe from harm—from the hand of violence and revenge, and that all its slumbers are guarded by a nation's power—will, she—oh, can she, as the consequence of *her* acts, bear to behold the southern mother startling and shuddering, at every foot fall, and at every noise which breaks upon the silence of the night, and flying from her pillow of wakefulness and wretchedness to kneel and crouch upon the cradle, weeping and sobbing in the agony of her soul over the murder and the horror that surround it? Will the father and the citizen hail us and greet us and press us to their bosom, as better brethren and better men, when we shall come up with our hands all red and reeking with the blood they have made us shed? But if not, then abjure the cause which involves the crime, and the disciples who support it. Friends of the slave! they are stripping him of the wretched remnant of liberty he has left. Friends of humanity! they are cruelly and recklessly staking it upon means of massacre and convulsion. Friends of the country! they are rapidly becoming its iron homicides—cleaving down its institutions with murderous hand, and tearing it limb from limb. If you would see the practical working of the spirit that is spoken of—the woe and the ruin it can occasion, go to the quiet and the passive slave of the south, pour your insurrectionary sentiments into his ear, parade the worst of his condition in artful and in pic-

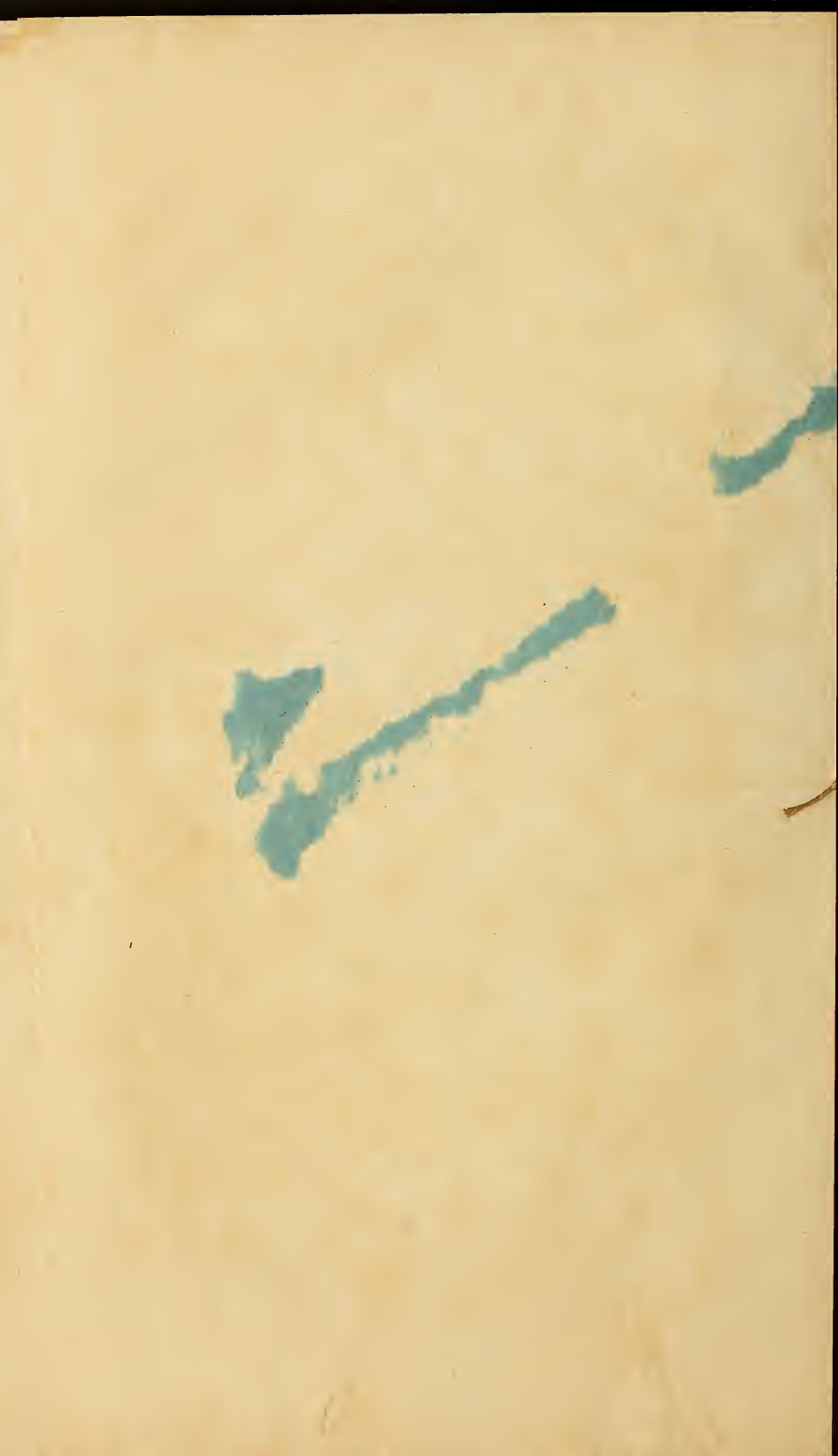
tured horror before his eye, then trace the progress of the poison—trace it through his murmurs, his resentment, his resistance; his passions growing deeper and darker at every step, under the discipline he provokes, until anger and ulceration and agony of spirit have done their work, and revenge and murder have become the companions of his bosom: then see him leagued and banded with others as fell and as furious as himself, the vulture at his heart, the dagger and the torch in his hand, stealing into the silent and midnight chamber, and standing, with horrid and uplifted weapon, over the parent and the child as they slumber for the blow, see him—let the shriek, the gasping struggle, the gory blade, the blazing dwelling, tell out the deed that is done. For one moment—one palsied moment—a shivering and convulsive horror seizes upon the heart of millions of our people—in the next, a dreadful wrath drives on to a dreadful retribution. But if the blood of our people is ever thus to stream in our dwellings, and ooze from the very bosom of the soil that feeds us, it will cry from the ground like that of Abel for vengeance, vengeance against the brother hand that shed it, and vengeance would be had, though every drop that was left should be poured out in one anguished and dying effort to obtain it. Nothing—no nothing but heaven could prevent a people, so lashed up to frenzy by rage and suffering and wrong, from pouring back, upon the fields and firesides of the guilty, that visitation of calamity and death which had been sent to desolate their own. Spare us—oh, spare us the curse of a ruptured brotherhood, of a ruined, ruined country. Give up your happy and united country; give it up to the madness of some factious hour, to the frenzy of some fanatic spirit; let it sink overwhelmed in some horrible struggle of brother with brother, and you will recover its liberties and its blessings again, when the sun shall “slumber in the cloud, forgetful of the voice of the morning.”

“When earth’s cities have no sound nor tread,
And ships are drifting with the dead,
To shores where all is dumb.”

Here upon your northern fields it was, at some dark and dismaying period of our revolution, when army after army had been lost, when wretched and dispirited and beaten, the boldest

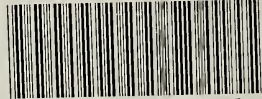
quailed, the faithfulest despaired, and all, for an instant, seemed to be conquered except the unconquerable will of our glorious chief:—here it was, that rising above all the auguries and the terrors around him, he exclaimed to the despairing of his followers as if inspired of Heaven for his work, “strip me of the wretched and the suffering remnant of my soldiers—take from me all I have left—leave me but a standard—give me but the means of planting it upon the mountains of West Augusta, and I will yet draw around me the men who will lift up their bleeding country from the dust and set her free.” That “West Augusta” stands here to-day pleading through me, who am a son, for the individual and unbroken heritage of Washington and his comrades. Loyal to the result as to the struggle of the revolution—devoted, as when her devotion was counted upon as equivalent to fate—true, as when you were grasped and bound to the bosom of each other in the hour of distress, it is her hope and her wish to finish with you the destinies of the nation—arm in arm to share with you in a common glory, and perish, when perish she must, only upon a common field:—thus testifying, through all time, to a fidelity which there was nothing in life that could shock, and nothing in death that could destroy. Turning her eye and her heart upon no other banner than the proud one which floats from the capitol of the republic, she prays as she looks upon it with its “stars and stripes,” that the glad shout which centuries hence may hail it in the land of the Pilgrims, may be echoed back from the waves of the Pacific Seas. Heaven grant that generations and ages hence, some future son of the south, honoured and welcomed and greeted as I have been to-day, may stand upon this consecrated spot, praising and thanking God, as I do, that he also can say, *these are my brethren, and this, this too is my country.*







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